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FRAGMENTS

ON THE

ORIGIN OF KINGS,

AND

HUMAN DEBASEMENT.

— *Such was the Origin of Kings. At first
The wise elective magistrate, but now,
Too oft, the weak hereditary scourge
Of half a groaning world.*



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THE ORIGIN OF KINGS.

A FRAGMENT.

_____ **W**HEN Time was young,
And Earth was clad in Nature's rudest garb,
Dark tangled forests, desarts vast and drear,
Wild heaths, and reedy lakes, and rushy fens ;
When fresh and vig'rous from th' Eternal hand,
Man trode the rough domain ; himself as rough,
The bus'ness of his life to propagate,
To draw nutrition, and to keep at bay
Instinct's ferocious swarms ; then the wide world
Was but a huge estate, Heav'n the prime Lord,
And all mankind his equal tenantry.
No power was known, save that which Nature owns—
Paternal sway—Clad in the spoils of brutes,
And unrestrained as is the mountain's blast,
Dauntless and firm the sturdy savage roam'd,
His family a state, himself a chief.
Water, wild fruits, and animal repasts,
Compos'd his worldly good ; with these in view,
On the rough margin of some stream or lake,
Begirt with matted brakes and forests tall,
He rear'd, with unskill'd hand, his wattled shed.
Around him, nimble as the bounding roc,
His naked offspring play'd. Time brought desires,
And from desires which to repress, was sin,

Full many a progeny soon frolic'd round——
 Affection filial, fondness for the seat
 Of all their youthful gambols, and the dread
 Of climes less bounteous, fix'd him to the soil.
 The patriot fire now glimmer'd, smaller tribes,
 Lur'd by the hopes of plenty, or induc'd
 By love of social intercourse, pour'd in,
 And by their ardent youth were soon made one.
 Thus congregated man, and thus wild wastes,
 The haunts of shaggy tribes, were sprinkled o'er
 With many a human dwelling. Settled now,
 Man's wond'rous faculties began to shoot.
 For Heav'n, who plac'd him midst this warring scene,
 Unarm'd and void of cowering, gave him pow'rs
 Superior far to all that brutes possess;
 Gave him by his own efforts to improve:
 Hence came the jav'lin, and the furry garb,
 And all that polish'd regions now enjoy.
 Each fire was still the sov'reign of his shed,
 And all internal bick'rings might compose.
 But, when contention 'mongst these very fires,
 Uncheck'd by pow'r superior, rear'd his head,
 All then was wild confusion. Hence 'twas found,
 That man i' th' social state lack'd more controul,
 Than could from patriarchal rule proceed.
 But, who might say what this controul should be.
 At length this grand, yet simple point t' adjust,
 'Neath some huge tree, by general consent,
 (Girt with their dearest relatives, who stood
 In mute amaze) the village Fathers met;
 And with bold action, metaphoric speech,
 And dauntless mien, pour'd forth their honest souls,
 'Twas genuine Nature all. A few strong laws
 The infant senate fabricated soon,

Which shew'd the fires all emulous of good ;
 For each strong law, however rude, was fram'd
 As laws should e'er be fram'd, like yon bright orb
 To shed no PARTIAL influence. All were bound—
 All by the ties which they themselves had made,
 Were bound alike, and therefore all enjoy'd
 Man's dearest, noblest blessing——LIBERTY——
 As ev'ry family its chief possess'd,
 And as their various families might now
 Be deem'd but one ; at the same time, perchance,
 To be their common Father, Guardian, Friend,
 And to enforce their EQUAL laws, some fire,
 For wisdom and for manly prowess fam'd,
 Was rais'd by free election 'bove the rest,
 And cloth'd, whilst those who rais'd him should think meet,
 With the fair robe of delegated power.
 Such was the Origin of Kings. At first
 The wise elective magistrate, but now,
 Too oft, the weak hereditary scourge
 Of half a groaning world. With slender wing,
 Along the ever-rolling stream of Time,
 Thus, like a twittering swallow, have I swept,
 Touching on nought, save some protruding capes
 Too obvious to be miss'd ; the earth's rude face,
 The natural state of man, his social days,
 And senates, laws, and regal rule how form'd.
 From these bold capes, to song but little known,
 The philosophic eye will clearly ken
 These simple truths, which the wide world should know :
 That God made man, that man made Laws and Chiefs :
 But that, nor God, nor man, ne'er form'd those rods,
 Call'd ARBITRARY KINGS———

HUMAN DEBASEMENT.

A FRAGMENT.

————— **I**N early days,
If Kings were made by men, and that they were,
And still should be, the light of Nature shows :
How comes it then, that Earth is fill'd with Slaves ?
How comes it then, that Man, this reasoning thing,
This being with such faculties endow'd,
This being form'd to trace the great First Cause,
Through many a wond'rous path ; how comes it then,
That he in ev'ry clime, should cringe, should crouch,
Should bend th' imploring eye, and trembling knee,
To mere self-rai's'd Oppressors ? Heav'ns ! to think
That not a tithe of all the sons of men
E'er kiss'd thy sacred cup, O Liberty !
To find where'er imagination roves,
Millions on millions prostrate in the dust,
Whilst o'er their necks, with proud contemptuous mien,
Kings, Emperors, Sultans, Sophies, what you will,
With all their pamper'd minions sorely press,
Grinding God's creatures to the very bone.
Yet man submits to all ! he tamely licks
The foot uprais'd to trample on his rights ;
He shakes his chains, and in their horrid clank
Finds melody, else, why not throw 'em off ?
Seven hundred millions of the human kind

Are held in base subjection, and by whom ?
 Why, strange to tell, and what futurity,
 As children at the tales of witch or sprite
 Will bless themselves to hear, by a small troop
 Of weak capricious despots, fiends accurs'd,
 Who drench the earth with tides of human gore,
 And call the havoc, GLORY. Britons, Yes!
 Seven hundred millions of your fellow-men,
 All form'd like you the blessing to enjoy,
 Now drag the servile chain. Oh ! fie upon't !
 'Twere better far within the clay-cold cell
 To waste away than be at such a price !
 Poor whip-gall'd slaves. Oh ! 'tis Debasement all !
 'Tis filthy cowardice, and shews that man
 Merits too oft by his degenerate deeds
 The yoke that bends him down. Power's limpid stream
 Must have its source within a people's heart :
 What flows not thence is turbid tyranny ;
 Rank are the despot weeds which now o'er-run
 This ample world, and choke each goodly growth ;
 But, that supine loud vaunting thing, call'd Man,
 Might soon eradicate so foul a pest,
 Would he exert those powers which God has given
 To be the means of good ; and what more good,
 More rational, nay, more approaching heav'n,
 Than the strong joys which flow from Freedom's fount ?
 Yon radiant orb, vast emblem of the Pow'r
 Who form'd him, beams alike on all mankind ;
 The air, which like a mantle girts the world,
 Is too a common good ; and even so,
 With amplest bounty Liberty is given
 To man whate'er his tint ; swart, brown, or fair ;
 Whate'er his clime, hot, cold, or temperate ;
 Whate'er his mode of faith, whate'er his state,

Or rich, or poor, great Nature cries, **BE FREE.**
 How comes it then, that man neglects the call?
 Nay, like the calous felon, chuckles loud
 Amidst corrod'g chains? Can that Great Cause
 Who made man free, both mind and body free,
 And gave him reason as a sentinel
 To guard the glorious gift; can he be pleas'd
 To see his rich donation cast away,
 Or part with inattention, as not worth
 Th' acceptance of his creatures? **NO**, my friends;
 Whate'er God gives, he gives to be enjoy'd,
 But not abus'd; and the mean wretch who 'neath
 A tyrant's feet this precious jewel throws,
 Spurns the vast Power who plac'd it in his hands.
 How comes it then, that minds are thus abas'd,
 That man, though Nature loudly calls, **BE FREE!**
 Has clos'd his ears against her, and become
 A mean, a grov'ling wretch! Why, thus it is,
 O Superstition! thou who point'st to man,
 And call'st the fragile piece, a demi-god;
 Yes, thou who wand'rest o'er the world, array'd
 In pure Religion's mantle; thou whose breath
 Conveys those potent opiates to the brain
 Which bring on Reason's sleep; O! dark brow'd fiend,
 All, all these works are thine. —————

FINIS.

